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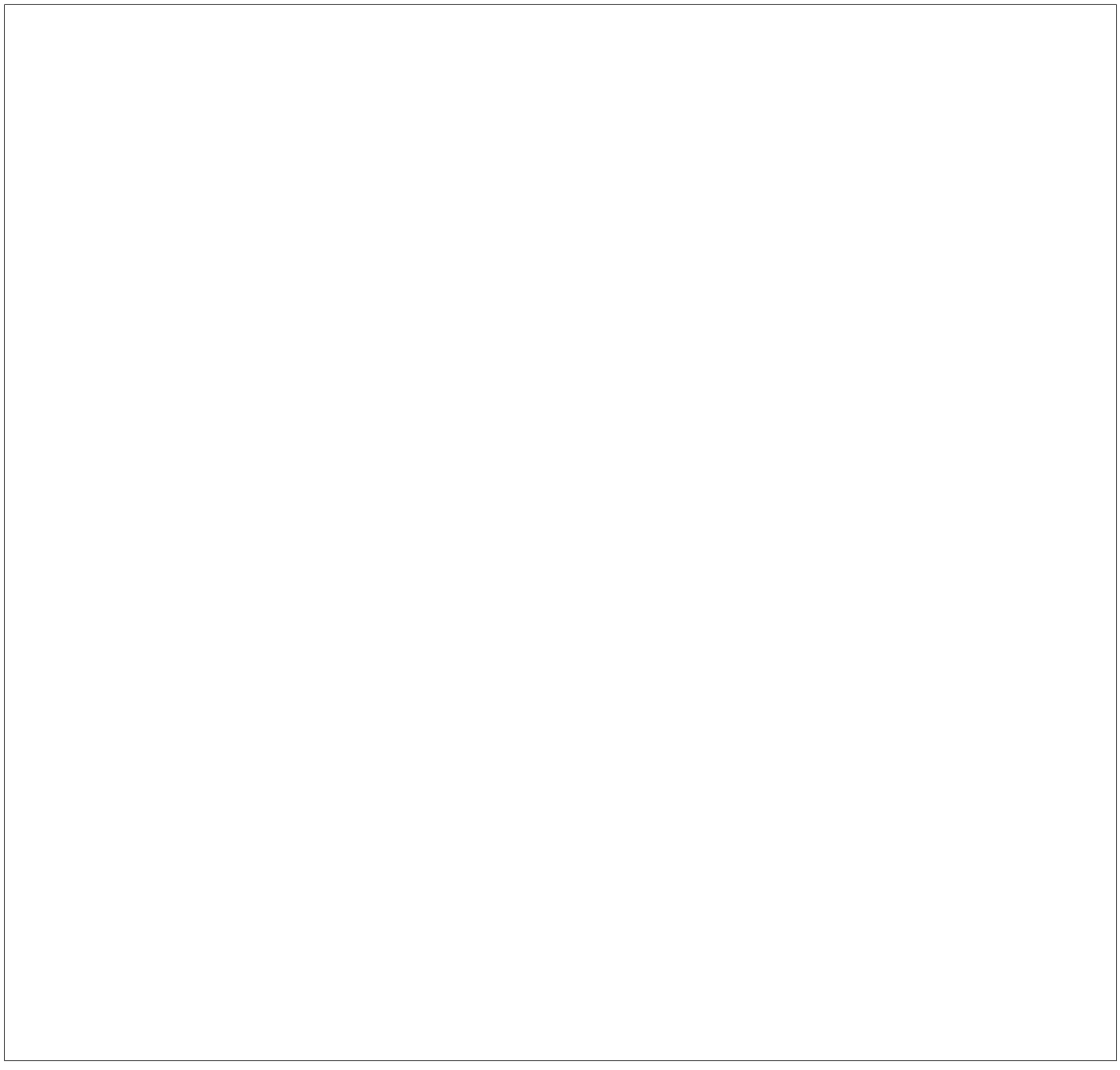

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ARGENTINA

President Peron's decision to cut short her summer vacation and return to Buenos Aires appears to confirm rumors that political tensions have reached a disturbing level.

Reports of military opposition to key presidential adviser Lopez Rega, imminent shifts in the cabinet, and growing conflicts between Peronist labor leaders and the government are fueling widespread speculation that a major confrontation is in the offing. With strong opposition to Lopez Rega apparently forming among the military, Peronist labor, and the opposition political parties, Mrs. Peron will be under great pressure to curtail his power. The strength of military and labor sentiment to continue to support the President is not clear, but they are the critical factors in determining her continuance in office The fear that chaos would develop should Mrs. Peron resign rather than bow on this issue may counsel restraint on the part of Lopez Rega's opponents.

Lopez Rega thus could ride out the storm. He has had uncanny success in outsmarting his enemies in the past. There is a possibility that some face-saving compromise could be effected to play down his role and quiet his critics--at least temporarily.

Adding to the President's immediate problems--and to the widespread mood of disquiet in the capital--is a new ultimatum from leftist extremists. They are threatening to conduct a campaign of "indiscriminate execution" of government officials and Peronist leaders unless the police show publicly by Sunday night that 19 captured guerrillas are still alive.

Earlier, the discovery of a bomb within the compound of Mrs. Peron's beach resort reportedly caused her to move to a nearby naval base before returning to the capital. [redacted] 3.5(c)

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